

# **Neighborhood Planning for Community Revitalization**

## **A Brief History of CARAG** *The Calhoun Area Residents Action Group neighborhood*

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**Author's Note:**

*My hope is to construct a rough outline of the major events that have shaped the neighborhood that lies between Lyndale and Hennepin avenues and Lake street and 36th, or CARAG, the Calhoun Area Residents Action Group. Throughout the following preliminary report I will refer to the research folder. This folder is a compilation of resources that I gathered over the course of the summer. It includes photocopies of newspaper articles, pictures, relevant passages from architectural books, and interviews with residents. This is by no means a comprehensive collection, nor is my report a finished product. The history of the neighborhood lives differently in each individual memory. With this in mind, any input is welcomed and encouraged. Please contact the CARAG office at (612) 823-2520 with any additional information that may be relevant to the project. I hope my summer's work begins to highlight the importance of the neighborhood's history and the relevance of each and every story therein.*

# **Chapter One**

## **A Brief History of the Carag Neighborhood**

## The Land

The entire southwestern lakes area, in which the CARAG neighborhood is located, was once part of the Mississippi river. This is evidenced not only by the alluvial soil which makes up a majority of the soil composition, but also by the discovery of an underground river channel that goes under the lakes to a depth of 200 feet and a width of almost two miles. In addition to the lakes, which are remnants of that dramatic glacier period, another important factor left on the landscape is a small rise in elevation called a drift bluff that runs the length of west Minneapolis from Basset Creek in the north to past Wood Lake in the south. (see *Map of the Vicinity of the Falls of Saint Anthony*, by N.H.Winchell) Because of its relative elevation, ranging from 25 to 50 feet in height, this small bluff contributed to the development of the southwestern portion of Minneapolis, especially around lakes Calhoun, Isles, and, Harriet. Many of the buildings of the Lyndale Farmstead, which once included most of CARAG, were located on one of the more dramatic of these high points.

By and large the landscape was prairie, barren save for grasses and the occasional oak. There is a picture taken on the shore of Calhoun facing east that demonstrates dramatically just how sparse the prairie was in this area. (see illustration immediately after this document) Along the shore of Lake Calhoun there was very little flat land or beaches. The majority of the shore was swamp or bog land. It was only after extensive dredging of the lake, and the subsequent placement of that fill along the shore in 1911 and again in 1923-

1925, that Calhoun began to look the way it does today. (Wirth, 84-86)

### The "Olden Days"

The first known inhabitants of the area surrounding the lakes were the Dakota, who lived in the vicinity of East Calhoun and North Harriet for at least two and a half centuries before the first white settlers arrived. (approximately 1835) There are conflicting reports of the Dakota having a village either where the bandstand now lies on Harriet or on the bluff which now holds the Greek Orthodox church. Regardless, these first people hunted and fished in and around the lakes as well as planted some corn and tobacco. The band would grow during the winters when families came together to weather the cold but come spring many would take to the trails. These trails criss crossed the area, often leading to and following the Mississippi. (see map 1 in folder) The Dakota called Lake Calhoun *Mde Medoza*, which means lake of the loons.

The history of white settlement around the lakes goes all the way back to two brothers, Gideon and Samuel Pond. They were missionaries who came to live amongst the Dakota and help develop a farming endeavor that had been established by Major Lawrence Taliaferro, who was the Indian agent at Fort Snelling. The farm was established at Eatonville, the area now occupied by the Greek Orthodox Church on the east side of Lake Calhoun. Named after John H. Eaton, the Secretary of War under Andrew Jackson, Eatonville was to be a meeting place of two worlds. In 1834 the Pond brothers built

what was really the first house in what is now Minneapolis. Saint Anthony had not yet been established, and the Mississippi was still the western boundary of the United States. The Pond presence lasted until 1843 when there was a violent altercation between the Dakota and the Chippewa. This resulted in the former band moving closer to Fort Snelling because of their fear of reprisal by the Chippewa. This move, coupled with the increasing flow of settlers from the East, began to dramatically change the face of Minneapolis and the Lake District.

The area now known as CARAG, as well as a considerable portion of East Calhoun and Harriet, was owned and farmed by various families who moved to the area in the middle 1800's. Later, the entire area came to be known as the Lyndale Farmstead. Purchased in chunks between the 1860s and the 1880s by the legendary Colonel William S. King, the Lyndale Farmstead was a gentleman's farm owned and operated by an eclectic Minneapolis original. Although he was from New York, King quickly became a famous local figure after moving here in 1858. He was one of the first to call himself a Republican, was a dedicated abolitionist and journalist, and was also involved in real estate, animal husbandry, and the initial development of the streetcar.

There is a story told by C.M. Loring, another important local historical figure, that King, while driving on the east side of Lake Harriet, heard the sound of an ax. Following the sound, he came across a farmer clearing his land. Possessed by a desire to protect and conserve the land, King reputedly drove immediately into town and before nightfall owned the farm. From that day on King was to

play the role of conservationist and champion of the park system. Throughout the next ten years, King obtained lands on the east and southeast shores of Harriet and Calhoun, eventually accumulating somewhere between 1400 and 2000 acres. The boundaries were approximately 28th street, Lyndale Ave., 50th Street and Beard Avenue. (additional information can be found in articles from *Lake Area News* and *Ecco News*, both of which are in the research folder)

Because of his support of Abraham Lincoln's run for the presidency, King was appointed Postmaster of the House of Representatives. Unfortunately, his term was somewhat rocky because he was implicated in a payoff scheme and King was forced to come back to Minnesota a little earlier than planned. Before he did, however, at about the same time he is reputedly to have received the kickbacks, King made a number of significant purchases around Calhoun and Harriet that expanded it to the proportions given above. Hennepin County property records show that between the summer of 1870 and the summer of 1871 King made 16 land acquisitions. Some of these lands were owned by people like Deacon Mann who owned the pre-emption at Lake Harriet, and Father Gear and Charles Mousseaux who had claims to most of the east and southeastern portions around Lake Calhoun. (*ECCO NEWS*, 1978) Whether or not the neighborhoods of CARAG and ECCO were purchased with this dirty money is probably an unsolvable mystery. It does, however, serve as a proper foil to the trend of celebrating only the civic virtues of our local founding fathers.



Having accomplished his dream of preserving the natural landscape, King went into animal husbandry, primarily cattle, obtaining the finest stock from Europe and the surrounding United States. His crowning glory is said to have been when he sold a prize Shorthorn for \$14, 000, which was then brought to England to enhance their herds.

King was involved in many other ventures including a host of local fairs, which eventually were merged into the State Fair. He also built the Calhoun Pavilion on the east side of the lake in 1877. This was later named the Lyndale Hotel. Perhaps his most innovative focus was the streetcar, which was to play such a pivotal role in the development of Minneapolis. Unfortunately, the Pavilion was still too far from town in 1877, and the streetcar would take another few years to make it out to the lake. The Pavilion was resultantly not much of a success and it, along with other financial trouble, put King into increasing debt.

Eventually, having over extended his resources, King was forced to sign most of the property away to a friend of his from New York named Philo Remington, (his grandfather had invented and manufactured Remington Guns) in exchange for help paying his loans. Remington took over the debt in exchange for the Lyndale Farm and the Pavilion. Remington sent out a personal assistant named Cal Innes to do the transactions. Within a year, Remington, who was busy selling guns in Europe, also began experiencing some financial strain so he sold the property to a Minneapolis developer named Louis Menage. Innes played some part in the proceedings, not the least of which was his successful attempt to thwart King's

attempt to buy the land back from Remington before its sale to Menage. Innes did this because he saw the growth of the city and the very real opportunity for land speculation. This vision of new development was in contrast to King's long standing vision of the land as park. Innes's and Menage's names show up on many deeds in the CARAG neighborhood as do the titles Remington Additions and Calhoun Park. The latter title was given by Menage, and included most of the properties within CARAG that are adjacent to Lake street .

Eventually, King sued Menage for his property, and in a very complex legal battle that went to the Minnesota Supreme Court, he won back almost two million dollars worth of assets and property. By this time, however, much of the Lyndale Farm had been platted and developed, and King's dream of an unmolested tract was destroyed. Unswayed, King was still involved in the development of the area and gave land worth an estimated \$250,000 to the Lakewood Cemetery. (see book on Lakewood Cemetery) In addition, he kept the actual Lyndale Farm buildings, which were in the family until 1920 when they were willed to the Park Board. These properties can still be seen on 37th and King's Highway, where the Park Board and Park Police are headquartered.

Because of his many accomplishments and passionate demeanor, King was nicknamed "Old Thaumaturgus", which means miracle worker in the Dakota language. C. M. Loring wrote in the Minneapolis Journal at the time of King's death, "Colonel King was one of the most remarkable and energetic of the early pioneers of Minneapolis. In the park system, in Lyndale park and the woods of

Lake Harriet, Colonel King has left a monument of his generosity and his love for his fellowman." (February 26, 1900. See folder)

### **The First Suburb**

It is important to remember that up until the twenties or thirties, the neighborhoods south of Lake Street were considered to be suburban. Indeed, when the Aldrich Presbyterian church on 35th and Aldrich expanded in 1956, it was in response to the continued "suburban sprawl" of the neighborhood to the south. Likewise, at the turn of the century, the lake district was considered far away, and as such, weekend and summer homes were built in areas such as Cottage City, which lay on the south end of Calhoun.

Despite the distance, and the inconvenience of having to go downtown for many goods, people did move south, and quickly. The 1892 plat map, which was the first to include all of CARAG as part of Minneapolis, shows approximately 150 structures scattered over the 36 square block area. Of course there were a greater number of developments closer to Lake street, especially commercial properties, but the map does show a fairly even distribution. Lake street was graded in 1883, improved from a dusty wagon road to something more befitting a major thorough fare linking the lakes with the Mississippi and everything in between. This, no doubt, also spurred development in the area. Most citizens of Minneapolis still lived in the downtown area, however, and came to the area only for recreation. These first "visiting suburbanites" would travel south by horse and carriage out Park Avenue to Lake Street and then west to

Lake Calhoun for swimming, fishing, and boating. Wealthy citizens would often build their own private docks on the lake.

The bustling corner of Lyndale Avenue and Lake street illustrates the rapid rise in development that occurred in the 1880's and 1890's. One factor that contributed to Lake and Lyndale's growth was that up until 1905 commercial properties were forbidden on Hennepin Avenue. The Paus block (1887), the Paus building (1890), and the Latham building (1888) all located on the southwest corner of Lyndale and Lake, show the concentrated commercial boom that resulted from, and no doubt helped to catalyze, the dramatic increase in residential settlement. The Paus Block was built by Henry Paus for \$8, 000. Mr. Paus was a local real estate developer who lived on 3008 Fremont Avenue. Another local man was the first to occupy the building. J. Frank Gould, the "Pioneer Druggist" owned and operated the drugstore which was described in the *Spectator* as having a \$1,000 marble and ebony soda fountain and the very best cigars. (The *Lake Area News* ran an informative article on this corner which is included in the folder.)

Hennepin, on the other hand, was designated as a Boulevard by the Park Board and as such was devoted only to residential property. It was not until 1905 that a private residence on one of the corners was razed in order to build a storefront. As befitting the speedy rate of development, however, all the corners were commercial within the following five years.

## **The Face of Family**

In addition to private homes and businesses, Lake Street also saw the building of the Calhoun school in 1887 on the corner of Girard and Lake street. It is immediately recognizable in pictures by its formidable fortress like appearance. Their playground was a full empty block across Lake Street. The first class is reported to have had 200 students.

The Calhoun school is indicative of the demographics of CARAG, as many families were moving into the relatively rural area with the hopes of building a home and raising their children. Two recurrent themes in the numerous interviews I conducted with residents who grew up in CARAG was their tenure at the Calhoun school and their disappointment when it was destroyed. Many old timers in the neighborhood, ranging in age from 95 to their 50's, all thought that the destruction of Calhoun school and later West High took out two of the major social and community ties to the area and changed irrevocably the face of the area.

Aside from the obvious importance a school plays in a family's decision on where to live, there were two important factors related to the Calhoun school that the older residents mentioned often. The first was the amount of stories they had of their walking to and from school everyday through the neighborhood. This regular walk gave them first hand experience of the landscape, put them in direct contact with their neighbors and local businesses, especially the candy store on Lake Street just east of the school!, and provided a fun time to meet and play with friends. Ray Myer's, who grew up on

3037 Aldrich, recounted in our interview how he sometimes would hitch a free ride on the ice sleds that went through the neighborhood. These sleds were operated by the ice companies who cut ice from Lake Calhoun and stored it in various parts of the city to be sold for refrigeration. On their way back up 31st street from a storage shed on Nicollet, the sleds offered a comfortable ride to school on a cold day. Mr. Myer's mentioned that they were easy to jump on because they were low to the ground on account of the heavy blocks of ice they were designed to carry. "Usually the driver wouldn't care", he said, "although sometimes they would yell at ya and make you get off. It sure beat walking in the winter!"

The other important aspect of the school was its symbiotic relationship with the local churches. Calhoun school, like most schools at the time, did not have a gymnasium or large auditorium for meeting. To solve this latter problem and owing to its proximity, Joyce church offered its main hall for large assemblies. Perhaps more importantly for the young people, the churches also offered athletic facilities. Lyndale Congregational had a swimming pool when it was located on Lake Street, Ray Myer's recalled, although he was disinclined to use it. Instead, he would use the gymnasium they had. The church, seeing it had something the young people wanted, decided that they in return could ask of the youngsters, and a rule was made that athletic privileges would be lost if two Sunday school classes were missed in a month. Needless to say, Ray Myer's and his friends diligently attended Sunday school.

The churches seem to have been the primary athletic venue in most neighborhoods of the city, supporting leagues in basketball,

baseball, and football. In the *heyday* at Aldrich Presbyterian, according to Pastor Don McNair, as many as 40-50 teams were sponsored by the church! The teams would play other leagues within their own denomination and against the other local churches.

Most residents of CARAG are familiar with Bryant Square Park, but it was not always the green oasis beckoning sporting fun. Ray Myers remembers when it was a dumping ground for the ashes from resident's coal stoves. It was a sunken area dug deep enough that when it rained it filled with water and formed a sort of pond. Mr. Myers also recalls that in the summer when he and his friends would play baseball they would avoid the vacant square because it attracted rougher boys. These young men, who weren't really so rough, but just older and more intimidating may, according to Mr. Myers have worked at the stables on 28th and Lyndale. Myers and his friends instead would use the vacant lot on the corner of 31st and Aldrich where Lyndale Congregational Church now stands. The lot was owned by the church in the 1910's but they left it wild, perfect for a pick up game. Although Bryant Square was acquired by the Park Board in 1904 it apparently wasn't well cared for initially. (Wirth, pg. 72) Indeed, it was not graded until the early seventies according to Joanne Lee, who recalls that before then it was difficult to see the kids playing from the sidewalk the field was so deeply submerged!

Ray Myers moved into the northeastern corner of the neighborhood when it was already a bustling suburb bordered by the vibrant commercial corridor of Lake street. Beatrice Sward, a lifetime member of Joyce church, on the other hand, moved a little

further south into an area where there was still only a couple of other houses on her block. Bea, pronounced Be, moved to 3433 Fremont in 1909, when she was seven years old. Her family moved at that time so she could attend Calhoun school. Had she stayed in their old house, she would have attended Whittier. Her father, an engineer for a machine shop on the other side of Lake (possibly on 28th) had rented in various places along Nicollet and moved to CARAG to build his first house. Their block of Fremont apparently had only a couple of other older structures when they moved in. These, Bea recalls, were set back on their lots, away from the newly graded streets, "It was like a country area" she said at one point a little wistfully.

One of the structures, a duplex on the corner, was called the Ark because it was so old. This, however, was not the oldest structure according to Bea. That distinction went to the original farm house across the street. Set back from the street, this house reminded Bea of her grandparents "country home". When Bea's family moved in, the children from the farming family, of which there were "quite a few", had already grown up and moved away. Bea did remember the "old fashioned names they used to have" on the farm, like Sadie and Millie, which Bea thought were "awful". This comment led me to ask her if she considered the farm family old fashioned. Without hesitation Bea answered in the affirmative, that yes, they were somehow different than her family which had just moved into the area from the city. While it would be jumping to conclusions to qualify this distinction as the norm, I suspect that at this time there still was a clear sense of city and country and I



believe it fell somewhere within CARAG's boundaries. This obviously would change swiftly in the following fifteen years.

One of the most notable memories that Bea shared was the alternately dry and active stream bed that ran behind her house on what is now Dupont. Bea recalls it was not really big enough for swimming but some older local boys who lived down the road with their parents would row a boat around and offer rides. In the winter there was skating on the pond and Bea recalls the old fashioned skates that they wore which were strapped onto a person's boots. "Once a boy took mine and strapped them on", Bea bemusedly relayed, "I guess it was alright though, no one made fun of him". Others I spoke with also recall the long covered stream bed. Glen, the local barber turned historian whose shop is on 36th and Bryant, pointed out that behind the grocery, kiddy corner from his store, you can still see the deep ravine that was the stream bed. It ran across what is now 36th, and through what is now the Express Lube but once was a Mobil filling station. Apparently, when they tore down the filling station, they found a tap to an artesian well, which suggests the stream hasn't disappeared, just gone underground! According to Bea, this seasonal stream finally was removed from the landscape when Dupont was paved. This was hard to certify, as I was unable to ascertain when the street was paved.

One thing is for sure, there continued to be open areas in the neighborhood up until at least the building of the apartments on 34th and Colfax in the mid fifties. Joanne Lee recalled the open lot across from the house she was born in at 3419 Colfax as a cross between a "big dump and a wild prairie".

Another fond memory Bea had of the neighborhood was its proximity to Lake Calhoun. Bea would go there regularly to swim. Because of the city law prohibiting the wearing of bathing suites in the streets, "especially wet ones!", Bea would cover herself in a raincoat before walking the short distance to the lake. She also recalls riding on the back of her girlfriend's brother's motorcycle. This, she noted with glee, was totally against her parent's rules but, as she queried of me, "would you tell your mother everything?!". Bea mentioned that as an only child she felt overprotected. She would spend long hours alone making paper dolls. Despite her feeling overprotected, Bea did have to admit the fun she had when her father, who rode his bicycle to work, took Bea on the handlebars.

Another interesting anecdote was told to me by Joanne Lee regarding her neighbor who lives at 3429 Aldrich. According to Joanne, this older neighbor claims that when she was young she could see the lake from her house on Aldrich! Whether or not this is true is difficult to say, but it does excite the imagination. One factor that may have affected this ostensible view would have been the Elm trees that were planted along all the streets. Today these giants are mostly gone, but up until the seventies, when Dutch Elm disease struck, they would have blocked any view. But when Joanne's neighbor was young perhaps they were not planted yet and maybe between the few existing houses you could see the lake. If so, it must have been just after the turn of the century - Joanne thought her neighbor to be in her late eighties.

## The Early Development of the Lakes Area

One of the factors that contributed enormously to the development of the East Calhoun area of Minneapolis was the streetcar. Like in other neighborhoods throughout Minneapolis and Saint Paul, the streetcar was to be the primary conduit bringing urban life to what had been the rural areas surrounding the inner city. CARAG is of note because it was one of the first areas to see the streetcar and resultantly it is one of the first "outer rings" to be populated. Indeed, some of the major players in the development of the streetcar, like Thomas Lowry, also were instrumental in the development schemes of South and West Minneapolis. Around the lakes, this development occurred rapidly because of the obvious attraction the natural amenities held for people.

It is interesting to take this more recent popularity and put it in context. The areas around the western shores of the lakes, especially around the confluence of Lake Street and Hennepin Avenue, have been meeting grounds since the earliest Native American inhabitants lived here. (This can be seen in map number 2) Hennepin was a primary Indian trail long before it became a military road or was purchased by the Park Board and made into a Boulevard in 1884. So it is no surprise that as soon as the developers and civic minded actors of the day began to look past the downtown area they looked straight from the river towards the lakes, following the ancient byways.

Prior to the first streetcar, people came to the area along two primary routes, the first was the aforementioned military road

now known as Hennepin, and the second was a wagon trail that followed Minnehaha Creek from Fort Snelling. They came to fish and hunt, as well as swim. Later residents of Minneapolis would travel up Park Avenue to Lake Street and then west from there to Lake Calhoun.

## **The Streetcar**

The first real modern development and precursor to Minneapolis' growing to be a metropolis was the advent of the streetcar. In 1876 a horse drawn car line was extended out Hennepin to Lyndale and south on Lyndale. I'm not sure exactly how far it went. By 1878 the Lyndale Railway Company extended a line from Bridge Square (near the present downtown Post Office) to the city limits at 26th and Nicollet. In 1879 the name of the company was changed to the Minneapolis Lyndale and Lake Calhoun Railway when it was extended to Colonel King's Pavilion on Lake Calhoun. (see map included in streetcar section of folder) A single track was laid up Nicollet to 31st where it turned west and went to Hennepin. From there it curved gently left (south) to the lake at about 34th. Of note are the row houses at 3310-20 Humboldt which served as sleeping quarters for the workers. (see the packet compiled by Bob Glancy in the streetcar section) The following years saw many changeovers in the new industry and a number of different investors from James J. Hill to Charles Pillsbury. One of the greatest problems associated with the streetcars was the amount of noise and smoke that their steam engines produced.

Things did not go well for the streetcars until they were forced by a city ordinance to switch from steam to another form of locomotion. At this time the Minneapolis Street Railway Co. took over operations. The M.S.R. was organized by Thomas Lowry and William King in 1875. One of the first improvements they made was that an additional track was laid on 31st, from Nicollet to Irving. They also were responsible for the building of the Lake Harriet Pavilion which they operated with the Park Board. In addition, they made what was probably the most important change concerning the viability of the streetcar, they switched to electrical power. Electrification of the lines to Lake Calhoun and Harriet was completed on May 24, 1891. The following year the M.S.R. merged with the St. Paul City Railway Co. to form the Twin City Rapid Transit Company, which ran the cars until their discontinuance in 1954.

The obvious connection between the streetcar and residential development is not hard to maintain. Certainly the involvement of Colonel King was in large part due to his interest in bringing people out to his Pavilion. Though he may not have wanted his Lyndale Farm to be developed, when he lost it due to his financial difficulties it quickly was platted and built on, no doubt helped by the existing streetcar lines. And Thomas Lowry purchased large tracts of land further south with the precise intent of developing them in conjunction with his streetcar. The Lake Street Gazette says as much in regard to commercial development when it printed in March 1911, **"Rapid Increase in Land Values. Effect of car line on Lake Street seen"**. (see business section in folder)

This rapid increase occurred in response to the streetcar being moved from 31st to Lake Street in 1905. This move initially was opposed by a substantial faction of Lake Street businesses because they feared the noise and congestion. Despite their protests, the track was laid, and within one year's time most were happy with the resultant rise in business.

### **The Buildings We Call Home**

The first homes in CARAG, aside from those structures of the farming era, were probably built in the late 1870's. Unfortunately, the city did not require building permits until after 1886. There were a good number of homes by that time, however, and the trick is finding out when they were built. One way is, of course, just to look at the structure and visually identify it as looking old. This usually is a fair way of picking out some of the really old houses. Often these older ones will look somewhat out of place or have details that stick out. For example, 3516 Aldrich has double wooden front doors and very fine cast knobs and mailbox. Another way to tell is whether the house is in line with the other houses or if it is set back. If a house sits somewhat differently on its lot chances are good it was built before the area was platted in 1892. A third clue is its foundation. Almost all buildings prior to 1906 were built on limestone foundations. These are easy to spot, even if they have been painted, because of their rough striated texture and natural gray coloration.

By and large architecture is the best guide to establish roughly the time of construction. Most of the houses built from the 1870's to the 1890's were Eastlake or Queen Anne style cottages. Those built in Minneapolis would have been almost identical to those being built in the outer rings of any other city in the midwest or on the East coast. These by and large would cost about \$2,000 to build. There are some fine examples in CARAG of Queen Anne architecture such as the three adjacent sister houses on 31st and Colfax. Of these three, only one still shows its original clapboard exterior. The others are indicative of what has happened to most of the older residences in the past fifty years or so. Asbestos or tar panels often replace the original wood, and other obvious disrepairs can be seen.

The "Great Annexation of 1883" caused the western and southern portions of the city, including CARAG, to be incorporated into the Minneapolis city limits. This new designation, coupled with the improvements of the streetcar and significant investment by the Park Board in the lakes, caused the area to boom in residential growth. It was not until 1893 that houses began to be built in earnest all along the eastern side of Calhoun and Harriet. Prior to this time, the wealthier members of Minneapolis could build closer to the city on Park avenue or on Lowry Hill and the middle class could build somewhere between Hennepin and Park . By 1893, however, many of these areas were filled or prohibitively expensive and thus the areas further south and east began to be more in demand. The residential buildings that did exist prior to this time either had been built within the rural context of farming, or had recently been built close to the streetcar lines.

One example indicative of the trend in the late nineteenth century to build multi-family buildings is the brick row houses on the 30th block of Aldrich called the Calhoun Terrace Apartments. These were built in 1888. (permit included in folder) Lanegran and Martin in their book *Where We Live*, describe this trend as part of a building boom that was taking place across America. Minneapolis, along with other cities, was expanding outward as a result of streetcar technology, and apartments and duplexes started popping up along the streets served by this new urban convenience. The Calhoun Terrace building is illustrative of some of the more popular characteristics of this building boom. It was built close to the streetcar on 31st. Interestingly, it was built closer to Lake Street, perhaps because it was preferable to be a slight distance from the tracks, or perhaps the builder had a premonition that Lake Street would surface as a more important thoroughfare.

The apartments have an urban look. They are built of brick, which was still generally reserved for the upper class, and even incorporate some modest decorative effect with the projection of a double row of bricks at the base of the second floor. I believe they are of the Craftsman style, which became very popular a little later in the beginning of the 20th century. There are two remaining stain glass windows where there must have been one for every front middle window before. I was told by Elwood Swanson, who refurbished many of the apartments, that the original windows were all poured glass and resultantly were remarkably clear. The apartments were quite spacious. They were obviously built for upper middle class families. They originally were two floor



apartments with the bedrooms on the second floor and the first floor containing a living room, dining room, and kitchen in the back. Ray Myers, whose friend lived there with his family, recalled in our interview that the apartments were considered by the neighbors as very nice.

Although relatively little "treasure" was found by Bruce Jacobson when he was refurbishing the apartments for Mr. Swanson, he did notice a number of compelling idiosyncrasies in the building. The most interesting is that one of the main first floor joists, which can be found in the basement, is "humongous". Mr. Jacobson noticed that the huge piece of wood not only has various spikes sticking out of it but also has a number of telling angle joints cut out. These, he thought, may have been the angle brackets like those found in bridge construction. His thought was that perhaps this impressive joist had been salvaged from another construction site. More research might yield some historical treasure yet.

The popularity of four to eight resident buildings remained constant well into the 20th century. According to Lanegran and Martin, these buildings continued to be built along streetcar routes but also began to be incorporated into the older residential districts. This can be seen along a number of streets in CARAG. The predominant style at the turn of the century was the Craftsman stucco or brick.

Probably the most important and obvious facet of the neighborhood is the amount of apartments. As has been shown, these multi-family units were being built as far back as the 1890's. The major building period, however, occurred in the twenties as part

of a larger attempt at converting the area around the east side of Calhoun into an "apartment district". Many of the more remarkable apartments were built during this time. Spanish and Islamic influence can be seen in the ornate facias and twisted columns as well as more familiar medieval and Colonial Revival themes. While some of the more exotic styles are not found in CARAG but closer to Lund's Grocery on James Avenue So., there are numerous examples in the neighborhood of impressive brick work that still shines today. What is more, the area around 36th and Dupont and Girard is one of the most densely built up areas in the city. This in itself makes these apartments important, as they indicate an attempt at more urban style living that is comparatively rare in the Twin Cities. Perhaps if there had been more development like that seen here, Minneapolis would today have less suburban sprawl. Of course, the parking problems that are cause for complaint today might also have been solved by a more dense urban center and its requisite mass transit.

### **Local Businesses and Places of Meeting**

In addition to the druggist in the Paus Building that I have already mentioned, there where many small businesses scattered throughout CARAG. Indeed, these little shops and groceries where in many ways the anchors of the neighborhood, providing not only sustenance, but also community. Probably the two most powerful examples of this kind of local community besides the obvious retail centers centered on Lake and Lyndale and Hennepin and Lake are the shopping centers around 36th and Bryant and 34th and Lyndale.

The latter has been somewhat tarnished in the last twenty or so years but has been making a strong comeback since the popular ice cream cafe *Crema* opened in 1993. *Crema* is owned and operated by the son of Sonny Siron, a local resident and businessman who has been making ice cream for almost 50 years. Sonny, and his sister Joanne Lee, whom I interviewed, grew up in the neighborhood at 3415 Aldrich. Their father, an Italian-American, owned and operated a shoe shop next door to what is now his son's ice cream factory and grandson's cafe!

Sonny owned and operated more than just an ice cream parlor, it was a meeting place that served the whole neighborhood. Hamburgers were 25 cents and an ice cream cone was 15 cents. Located across 34th street from Sonny's was the Lyndale school which was torn down in the seventies. Joanne Lee remembers attending the school as did her children. In fact, both she and her kids had the same kindergarten teacher! Many of the school kids would go to Sonny's for lunch. All they had to do was cross the street and sit at the counter. Sonny's wife always made sure all the mittens and hats were properly collected when they scurried back to school. Joanne also told me that every day there was a local police man who would stop traffic so the school children could safely cross the street. He too lived in the neighborhood.

In addition to Sonny's, the corner had a drug store where the guitar shop recently opened, a National T, which was an early grocery chain, and another grocery owned by Mr. Olson on the northwest corner of Lyndale and 34th. In addition, there also was a butcher next to Sonny. Imagine, four food stores at the same

intersection! In our taped interview Joanne walked with me to the corner and recalled all the various businesses that have held sway there.

36th and Bryant is arguably the most neighborly feeling place left in CARAG. Indeed, it has been described as a small town in the big city. (see the Mpls. Tribune article in the business section of folder) Most of the brick buildings that house the various shops on the corner were built in the twenties. Some of the businesses like the butcher and the barber have been serving the community for most of that time. The butcher shop now known Brotherson's used to be Bredeson's. The amount of business within this shop back before grocery stores began carrying meat almost defies belief. They are said to have employed twenty butchers and sold 18 tons of ham over the Christmas holidays! They also would custom smoke fish brought to them by customers. One interesting aside is that Bredeson's was at one time located on 35th and Lyndale in the building that currently houses the restaraunt *El Meson*.

Glen Huerd, the infamous barber turned historian, has been cutting hair on 36th since 1960. Before him there was yet another man who cut hair. In his 37 years Glen has seen a lot of changes, of course, but none more important than the age of the residents. He pointed out that when he started, there were a lot of older residents. Certainly these old timers were older than the young upstart barber who was only 27! Unfortunately, most of those old timers have now died and with them much of the history of the neighborhood. Glen went so far as to say that just the other day he remembered something about the old days and wanted to tell somebody but there

was just nobody left to tell. But thirty some years ago, things were different, and there was lots of telling back and forth between cuts of the shears. Apparently his youth didn't deter the older folks from sharing, judging by the amount of stories he's heard over the years. Though he claims to have forgotten most of it, it is my strong opinion that given the right incentive, it is Glen who could write the definitive history of CARAG and her surrounding neighborhoods.

One amusing recollection Glen had was of the time when he shared his shop with a salon. For those who don't know what the difference is, according to Glen, a salon is a place where they cut and style longer hair, i.e. mostly a place for women. The salon was actually located through the back door of Glen's small shop in an adjacent space that is now part of the hardware store. In order to enter the salon, a customer would have to first pass through the barber shop and the door between the two was therefore always left open. It was through this door that many stories and gossip were exchanged, sometimes on purpose, other times inadvertently. Glen bemusedly recalled how sometimes when the men would be sitting around chewing the fat in the shop they would be interrupted by a chorus of voices chanting "louder, louder". It was the ladies in the salon listening in on them through the door!

Though Glen is semi-retired now, his son has succeeded him in the business. Perhaps he too will have the pleasure of hearing the history of the neighborhood from behind the barber chair.

The corner also includes another Glen, this one the owner of the hardware store next store to Glen the barber. Hardware Glen stresses the importance of the neighborhood to his business. Indeed,

it is only because he can provide expertise on repairing the older houses in the area that he can compete with the larger chains. The proximity and familiarity of the neighborhood which was so evident in the stories of the older residents like Ray Myers and Joanne Lee, seems to be alive and equitable on 36th and Bryant.

### **Places of Worship and Community Taproots**

Much of Lake Street was built initially as residential property, a trend that would change dramatically when the streetcar moved there in 1905. One example that perfectly shows the two different stages of Lake Street is that of Joyce church. Joyce church was initially started in 1886 as a mission of Simpson Methodist church (presently located at 2740 1st Avenue). In an oft quoted statement, the Reverend James Teeter, then pastor at Simpson, said of the CARAG neighborhood, "Especially I am concerned with the district lying in the outskirts of the city, the territory to the east of Lake Calhoun and Harriet and adjacent to Lake Street. It is my intention, Providence permitting, to organize a Mission Sunday School at the Old Town Hall located at Lake Street and Girard Avenue South". Imagine, not only on the "outskirts" of the city, but an area where concern was warranted!

The Lake Calhoun Mission, as it was then called, purchased the Town Hall and two adjoining lots from Cal Innes for \$4,900 and started the Lake Street Methodist Episcopal church in early 1887. The congregation grew along with the neighborhood so that by 1907 they built a new building. They choose to build one block south of

their previous church, at the corner of 31st and Fremont, where it is still located today. This church is an exquisite example of Spanish Mission style architecture. In addition to the spectacular outside, the inside contains some first class stain glass windows, especially the rose window that is installed in the north wall.

One factor that contributed to their desire to move off of Lake Street was the amount of noise and dirt caused by the increasing traffic. They timed their move perfectly, moving into the neighborhood and away from the commercial traffic of Lake and its newly constructed street car. A similar exodus can be seen in the case of Joyce's neighbor Lyndale Congregational church, which also moved from its original home at Lake and Aldrich to Aldrich and 31st. (see pictures of the old Lyndale Church and the new in the church section of folder) Today Lake Street is remarkable for the lack of churches along its entire length. There are only a couple still remaining.

Lyndale Congregational church also has played a significant role in the neighborhood as has Aldrich Presbyterian. Although all three churches have been suffering the losses in membership that have been seen across America, they continue to be important places of worship and spaces for community meetings. Lyndale Congregational continues to offer its space to community needs like day care, and social action groups, as well as having athletic facilities. It even houses a Hatha yoga school!

The church has a long tradition of including all members of the community and this tradition is being continued in two important ways. The first is that the co-minister Cathie Crooks is an outspoken

lesbian who is involved not only in ministering but also in Gay and Lesbian rights. The second is that the church is currently remodeling and installing an elevator to make the building handicap accessible.

Joyce church still plays an active role in the community by continuing the food shelf started by its former minister, Doug Marx. It also hosts inspirational evangelical services which sometimes are accompanied by musicians from the local colleges. I was fortunate enough to attend one of their services and found the community, though small, to be exceptionally warm and welcoming.

Aldrich too, continues to seek a strong voice in the community. It continues to be true to its evangelical roots. Today they incorporate soulful music in an attempt to "warm it up". One way it has enlarged its congregation and utilized its space is by inviting another group to worship in the church. This congregation is called the Word of Faith Christian church and is primarily made up of African Americans. It is led by the Reverend Eugene Royster. Aldrich also continues to support an impressive group of missionaries both in local areas and overseas.

The other church in CARAG is the First Unitarian Universalist which just recently moved into the old Adath Jeshuran temple. It too has a long history of community activism and social justice which continues today. The members of First Universalist church are perhaps most indicative of the new demographics of CARAG. The congregation embraces all age and ethnic groups as well as all sexual preferences. This openness is best illustrated by the arrival of their new minister who as a gay minister works for equal rights along side spiritual fulfillment.



Though Adath has moved to a new location in Minnetonka, it still lives on in the hearts of many in the "old neighborhood". This strong resonance is no doubt enhanced by the powerful building that was left behind. Built in 1926-27, the temple was designed by the well known architects Liebenberg and Kaplan. It is one of three Neo-Classical style synagogues built by the pair. The others are Temple Israel and Beth El. A group is currently attempting to have the building designated as a historic landmark, and their informative report is included in the folder.

Adath Jeshuran was built in large part because of the slow, southwester migration of Jewish people from the Northeast and Near East neighborhoods. It is said that they had the opportunity to purchase the site on which the Greek Orthodox church was built but that the land on Dupont was already owned by someone in the congregation. Within the neighborhood, the Superette on 32nd and Bryant was Jewish owned as was Abraham's, an authentic ethnic deli which was located on Lake Street in the same building which now holds the restaurant *Taste of India*.

Many of the apartments in the proximity were inhabited by members of the congregation, including those right across the street and behind the synagogue. Those across the street are said to have been residences for elderly members of the community in the 1970s. The congregation grew dramatically from the original 70 or so families when the temple was built to over 400 by the 1950s. In response the congregation built an addition in 1953 which held, amongst other things, a school. This school was not limited to Jewish

children, as Joanne Lee, a devote Catholic, happily sent her son there for preschool.

It is interesting to note that the relationship between the Jewish community and the Unitarian community started before their purchase of Adath. In fact, Adath Jeshuran purchased the Second Unitarian church building at Twelfth Avenue So. and Ninth Street in 1905 and converted it into a synagogue. This conversion process happened quite a bit in Minneapolis as different congregation's needs changed. One other interesting note is that Thomas Lowry was a member of the First Unitarian Church as was William D. Washburn, who founded the company that became General Mills.

### **In Closing**

I hope that the preceding pages have been of interest and excited your historical senses. CARAG, like most Minneapolis neighborhoods, has a long and disparate history. It includes moving personal narratives, stories of business acumen and real estate development, and mirrors the growth of the city at large. No where is this better seen than in the development of the streetcar, which was a powerful link that connected the city and made it a true metropolis. I have inevitably left many things out. Some of these are dealt with more thoroughly in the resource folder that I compiled and the interviews I conducted. Certainly to get a thorough history more interviews must be held and articles collected. What is more, the boundaries of CARAG are inevitably an arbitrary creation, invented only in the last twenty years. To fully understand the

many events that shaped the neighborhoods of South and West Minneapolis, including CARAG, a broader and more comprehensive perspective must be taken. It is my hope that someday the many different neighborhood organizations and groups in this part of Minneapolis can compile their collective resources and perhaps write a book. There is certainly enough history and lore to substantiate such a project. Until then, small projects such as these will have to suffice in stemming what has been referred to as "cultural and historical amnesia". I only hope that more can be done before, as Glen Huerd the barber sadly pointed out, there is no one left who remembers.

# **Chapter Two**

**Voices of the Local People**

## **From my interview with Pastor Ruth, 8-12-97.**

Pastor Ruth is relatively new on the job and in the neighborhood, as she has only been a pastor at Joyce for two years.

Pastor Ruth recalled some of the history of the church. There was a serious fire in the church in 1943. "If firemen had been called ten minutes later the place would have been destroyed". Apparently the rose window on the north wall was blown out in the fire. An old member visited Joyce in the past few years who hadn't been there since before the war and exclaimed that it looked exactly the same. This suggests that it was rebuilt exactly as it had been before.

The interior is a Modified Akron. The exterior is Spanish Mission style.

The church moved off of Lake Street and built a new church on 31st and Emerson in 1907. This date corresponds with the reason given for their move, which was that the growing noise from the streetcars on Lake Street was too great for the parishioners to bear. The Lake Street Line began in 1905.

The main windows on the west side are dedicated to Pastor Joyce.

There is a picture in the older portion of the building, where they hold coffee hour, that shows Joyce in 1907, the year it was completed. The picture is particularly of note because it shows the

surrounding houses. By this time Joyce was completely surrounded. No parking had been created because it was the norm that people didn't tether their horses near the church, for the smell.

Pastor Ruth reiterated that the church had been a community center.

Ruth was very helpful in providing names of long time Joyce members who might be willing to discuss the history.

Thelma Boeder. Archivist for the Methodist district, 122 Franklin Avenue. 870-0057 ext. 240

Beatrice (Bee) Sward "Life long connection, articulate, in 90's"  
Resident at Jones Harrison, 3700 Cedar Lake.

Helen Foster. Long time member. 822--0770

Doug Marx. Pastor from 1963-1976. Started the nursery school program and the food shelf. Resident at Walker 3701 Bryant #203.  
827-8639

## Interviews at Joyce Church

Office Hours: Monday -Thursday 9-2

Worship Sundays 10:30

Some people who I spoke with after attending Sunday service:

Rose Roberts - long time resident on West side of Hennepin. 32nd I think. Lived in area since twenties. Her and her husband owned a pharmacy on 28th and Hennepin. "There was a pharmacy every two blocks. Everybody knew one another. You could go into the cafe and they would serve you orange juice, coffee, and a roll without you even asking. They just knew you and what you wanted. People walked more. Were out more in their local area. After Calhoun school was torn down the area changed a lot. Less families moved in with kids. The school was a focus of neighborhood. More apartments were built and more single people moved in."

Rose apparently was interviewed by a University of Minnesota student of architecture about her knowledge of Joyce church. Used to be involved in ECCO but no longer. Seen by some as a resident expert because of her long standing residence.

Chuck Welsh - 377-9847, grew up in neighborhood. Member of the church since the forties. "1200 children in Sunday school in the post war years. Overflow crowds, needed to hold two services on Xmas

and Easter. Lot's more families then, less apartments. I was a member of the Young Adult Group which met weekly and planned square dances and fishing trips. Included all the local Methodist churches. Was the best venue for meeting friends and dates. No liquor licenses in those days in the area. Only a couple of 3.2 joints on Lake Street." There was a family night on Fridays when the members got together. Apparently no one stuck around for coffee in those days but left immediately after the service and went out to a restaurant like Tasty or the Rainbow Cafe. "People would mostly entertain at home. There is more involvement in the church now than in those days."

Mr. Welsh has seen a lot of changes, most dramatically the reduction of families in the area and the rise of single people and single parents as a more open gay community. In response to this shift, Mr. Welsh had this to say, "The Methodist church has a commitment to getting involved in the community and being more active. We have a relationship with other churches including Lyndale Congregational. Pastor Ruth is the first pastor from Joyce to get involved in the neighborhood, and that's a real feather in her cap".

Patrick Arden Wood - 371-4421- Moved to cities from Detroit on the early seventies. Professional activist. Works primarily with homelessness, especially amongst the mentally ill. Got really involved in social justice issues within Joyce in the mid-eighties when moved into the area. Maybe went to Joyce's Sunday school as a child - this was unclear from first meeting. Has some connection to



another long time resident named Barber York who also has been involved in social justice and Joyce. Patrick knows some other friends who have lived in CARAG for twenty or more years and have been involved in political activism. Patrick said that under the Reverend Marx in the mid sixties social justice issues became a real focus for Joyce. "There were more 'alternative' services".

Barber York - 825-2699 Has lived in neighborhood for awhile. Involved in Joyce, social activism. Seems to know a great deal of curious information, for example, that the bowling lanes that existed before Calhoun Square was built still exist under the mall. Ask the guy at the Golden Leaf (smoke shop in Calhoun Square) about it. And that a doctor had his home and practice across from Joyce and designed his house with a clinic in the back. And when fire destroyed Joyce (sometime during WW II) there was such bad morale that they were allowed to rebuild using steel, which was generally forbidden because of the war effort.

Joyce was moved from its Lake Street location to its current spot on 31st in 1896. Apparently the noise from the steam cars on Lake street was unbearable. Building was completed in 1906 as indicated by the corner stone. There was a bad fire, during WW II. Fire men said they could put out the fire quickly but would need to smash out the stain glass windows. Church members wouldn't allow this and the fire ravaged the interior.

Joyce is a classic Spanish Mission style. Apparently there are only a couple of dozen in the country. (Somebody came from Toledo, Ohio within the last few years to look at the church and made this appraisal). Rose Roberts has an article from a architecture book about the area that states Joyce is the most architecturally significant building.

The main worship hall is a later addition. The balcony is particularly popular with people. There is another similar design in another local Methodist church (?name?). Church has stain glass from the original building and later design. The stain glass displayed in the meeting room adjacent to the worship hall (the old worship hall) is from the original Sunday school room in the old church.

## Interview with Glen Huerd

I met with Mr. Glen Huerd, the owner of Glen's Barber Shop on 36th and Bryant. Glen is mostly retired now and his son David runs the shop. I was lucky to catch Glen, because he is semi-retired, but it was Tuesday, and he works then and on Saturdays. When I walked up to the store he was chatting on the street with Mr. Young, another long time businessman who owns Young Florists on the other side of Bryant. Glen is an extremely likable man, very talkative, funny, and informal. He has been in business for 39 years at the location there on 36th. The interior of the store has many objects that remind the visitor of the olden days, such as an antique cash register and old tonic bottles. Glen was happy to recount some of the lore around the neighborhood but emphasized he hasn't actually lived there in quite awhile. He moved to Bloomington in the 60's when the schools were desegregated and things "started getting bad". Glen was sorry to inform me that most of the "old farts" that would of known a lot about the neighborhood had died. "They all have passed on", he said. Luckily Glen knows a great deal about the neighborhood.

He moved in after the streetcars had been discontinued. He mentioned that behind the grocery on the southwest corner of Bryant and 36th there is a deep ravine that is an old dry riverbed. This, he said, passed over what is now 36th and ran into a swampy area on Aldrich. Apparently when the filling station on Aldrich was torn down they discovered a artesian well that had been tapped there. Also, they found many old bottles because it had served as a

dumping ground. When I mentioned that Bryant Square Park had also been a dump he agreed. Glen also pointed out that where there is now an apartment building across from his shop on 36th they used to dump the old streetcars.

Glen said that before Young's flowers there was a carpet cleaning place. This was called Kejvorkians I think. He also mentioned that the building housed, as it still does, a butcher, a hardware store, and a bakery. He said that they used to have 36 butchers working at the store!

Glen mentioned that there are some houses on Emerson that used to be where the cemetery is now. This jives with the 1896 plat map that shows part of the current cemetery as platted and with houses built on it.

Glen emphasized, as so many have, that the neighborhood used to be filled with families with lots of kids. "Used to be the norm to have six or seven kids", he said. "I remember a few of them that came in from the time they where so tall", he recollected, motioning towards the floor with his hand. Glen complained that they have torn down many buildings and that lots of the houses now have only one or two kids. Also he reiterated that most of the old timers have died and the new people are considerably younger. These people he thinks generally don't have as much invested because they're renters.

I asked him about the Jewish population around Adath Jeshuran and he agreed that there was a big community over closer to Hennepin towards the Lake. When I asked him about other ethnic groups he thought it was mostly Swedes and Germans but already 2nd or 3rd generation and so "Minnesotan". Glen pointed out that at that time everybody went to church, mostly at the Catholic churches in the area. He carried on about how social mores have changed and then he mentioned the home for unwed mothers that used to stand where Walker Residence now is located. This was of interest because it was a real "scandal back then to be a unwed mother". The home was run by the Methodists.

Glen would be happy to talk further. He suggested I also talk to Mr. Young who owns the florist and his father Art, who started the business.

## Interview with Bill Young

Mr. Bill Young was slightly less talkative at first but he warmed up. He recently suffered a stroke. His father, Art, had worked for Mpls. Floral for 25 years before he began his own business at the corner of 36th and Hennepin. I believe they had the shop there for about 20 years before moving to Bryant. Bill also talked at length about how the neighborhood had changed. He specifically mentioned the introduction of half-way houses and other rehabilitative centers as partially to blame for bringing in people who did not have any investment in the neighborhood. Also, the increase in apartments had created "just too many people" who didn't put down roots. Furthermore, they tend to shop outside of the neighborhood at Walgreens, K-Mart, ect.. Bill thought this was in part due to the fact that young people didn't grow up shopping at a local corner store.

Bill was pretty strongly against the designation of properties as Historic. He recounted how the mansions on Chicago and Franklin had been designated as such when he lived around there and that they had sat for thirty years without anyone wanting to touch them and then they finally got bulldozed. He instead is a proponent of having people invested in their own properties as the best way of insuring that the neighborhood is kept up. "If they are old and need to be torn down," he added, "that is what should happen as it is ultimately best for the neighborhood".

Bill was vaguely philosophical about the neighborhood in general. He kept repeating that it was a good neighborhood, always had been, but that it was victim to the cycles of decline that were natural. Bill lived his whole life in the city until recently. In addition, he drove a cab for about ten years and thus has a real knowledge of the whole city. He did have some racist things to say.

## **Preliminary interview with Joanne Lee**

Held impromptu in Olson's grocery on Friday Aug. 29, 1997 at 10 A.M.

Joanne Lee is 65. She moved into the neighborhood when she was five. Her family rented their home for four years at 40 dollars a month before they bought it for \$2,800. She has lived in this house on 3415 Aldrich Ave. So. ever since. When she was married they moved in with their parents. She attended Lyndale school and then Jefferson until the seventh grade, when she went to Annunciation for two years before transferring to West High. They would walk to Lyndale. At the corner where Olson's store is located, there was a Police Officer who would walk the children across the street. He was the father of Joanne's girlfriend, his name was Mr. Hograff?. He lived in the neighborhood. Joanne and her family attended Annunciation Catholic Church on 38th and Lyndale.

She has memories of skating in Bryant Park. It was still sunken during her childhood. She recalls they filled it in after her own children were born, so it was sometime in the 60's.

Joanne recalled all of the businesses that were on the corners of 34th and 35th. There was, of course, Olson's, owned by Don Olson. It was a grocery and sold meats too. Across the street on 34th there was a "wonderful" drug store. They had all the convenience necessities and a one of a kind druggist who filled prescriptions. There was a pin



ball machine in the store and all the local boys would play there. Next to the drug store was a National T, an early chain grocery. There also was a dry cleaner who moved further north down Lyndale. Across Lyndale, where Sonny's Ice Cream and Crema Cafe now stand, there was another grocery and a shoe repair shop. The cobbler was Joanne and Sonny's father. He was born in Italy although his wife was born in America. Joanne recalls that he never gave up his language and always had an accent. "He would give anything to anyone". If a person couldn't pay he would fix their shoes anyway. He would also send "bolts and bolts" of cloth back to his family in Italy. They were the only Italians in the neighborhood and Joanne remembers being called W.O.P.(with out papers) and so on. But she says they didn't care and didn't take it so seriously like they do now. Sonny's father lived over Northeast alone until he got sick and then his wife, who never learned English, came over to look after him.

#### **Interview with Joanne Lee cont.**

Down one block, where the auto body shop now stands, there used to be a Mobil station and a Big 10?, which was another grocery chain. Joanne said that they would sometimes go to 36th and Bryant to shop, especially to get meat from the butcher there.

One of Joanne's daughters still lives in the neighborhood across 34th from Olson's, which she owns.

She recalled the houses on 34th and Colfax that were eventually torn down to make room for the apartments that currently occupy the site.

Joanne obviously has a deep love for the neighborhood. She emphasized that many thought that the neighborhood was deteriorating, especially east of Colfax, but that in recent years it has been springing back. Her memories are most vivid of the local businesses and the community that patronized them. This is what she thought had changed most, people just don't shop locally anymore.

Possible questions for our next interview to be held after September 8th:

Go over the store names again. What were they selling. Did the owners live in the neighborhood. Do you remember what some of your friends parents did? Did they work locally? Do you remember any ethnic pockets in the neighborhood?

Our next interview was recorded

## **Interview with Eda Faye Orkin, Adath Jeshuran's archivist, 8-18-97.**

There is a brief history of Adath Jeshuran synagogue in an application for historic registry which is included in the folder.

Adath was the first conservative congregation west of Chicago.

Adath was the third synagogue for the congregation. Their first building was on 7th street downtown. This synagogue blew down in a tornado in 1906. The second building was across from the Hennepin Center on 9th and 12th where Eliot Park is now located. They worshipped here from 1906 to 1926. When their need for size increased, they decided to move west, both for more space and to follow the general migration of the congregation. They chose the site on Dupont because it was owned by Mr. Rose, a member of the congregation, who sold it to them at a good price. The other viable site that was available for purchase in the area was the land overlooking Lake Calhoun where the Greek Orthodox Church now stands.

The congregation consisted mainly of Romanians and Russian immigrants. They did not all live close to the synagogue, however. By this time the community already was pretty spread out. Mrs. Orkin thought that perhaps 11% lived near the building itself. This perhaps is indicative of the increasing economic mobility of the congregation and the decreasing need to support one another

through close knit community. This shift mirrors a change in traditional values within the congregation, a change that will influence later developments. Many who did live in the neighborhood lived on the west side of Hennepin, which slightly confuses the connection to CARAG. Within CARAG, there was one store, a delicatessen, that serviced the Jewish community.

Abraham's was located on the corner of Lake and Emerson from the 20's to the 50's, according to Orkin. Another store she recalls the children using for candy and snacks was the small market on the Northwest corner of 35th and Dupont. Orkin did not know whether the owner was Jewish.

One of the things Mrs. Orkin emphasized was a mistake for the Adath community was their failure to purchase the adjacent lots to the synagogue as they became available. This reduced their ability to expand and also to create parking. One factor that may have contributed to this reluctance to purchase land was a number of incidents that transpired concerning the ownership of property. One of these incidents concerned Rabbi Goodman who was the leader of Adath in the 30's and 40's. Rabbi Goodman lived somewhere between 34th and 35th and Humboldt, but because of the restrictions on driving on the Sabbath, he would stay at a duplex owned by a member of the congregation which was directly behind the synagogue on Colfax. The owner who resided in the other apartment was Adath's nursery school teacher. At some point in the early eighties Rabbi Goodman asked that the duplex be torn down and a new house be built to be used as a Sabbath residence. This

apparently was in a mini depression and was not an ideal time to build, and there were also some disagreements as to what role the temple should play in providing for the Rabbi. The result was that the Rabbi's desire was refused and he left to go to another congregation.

I think this incident is, in part, an example in part of the shifting values and expectations of the Jewish community. I speculate that in more traditional communities, the congregation would have provided a residence for the Rabbi and certainly they would have facilitated the restrictions of the Sabbath.

Prior to this exchange, there was a period of over twenty years in which there was talk of moving out of the city and further west. In 1969, Adath purchased a large track of land in Minnetonka to be used as a retreat center. Not long after, some members suggested they move the synagogue. Rabbi Goodman and others in the community felt strongly about staying in the city. There was a lot of support for staying in the city given by dedicated young people known as the "Sabbath regulars". These younger members of the community represented a increasing commitment to the city that began to rise amongst many different younger groups in the 60's.

When they did finally hold a vote, it was two to one to move to Minnetonka. They moved in 1993.

## Interview with Orin Rubenstein

I met Orin Rubenstein for coffee at Abbott Northwestern where he volunteers on a weekly basis. He knew everyone in the hospital and this, I was to find, is the norm for Orin; he seems to know just about everybody. Unfortunately, because of the location, we were unable to record our conversation. It is just as well, we wandered quite a bit from the CARAG neighborhood. Not on purpose mind you, it is just Orin's proclivity for making connections and moving from one idea and/ or person to another.

Orin grew up in the upper duplex of 3424 Girard. He attended the Calhoun school and later Jefferson and West High. His father was involved in clothing manufacturing - in what now would be considered a blue collar job, but at that time, Orin remembers it as being just a good job. In other words, there may not have been as much speculation as to what "blue collar" meant. When I inquired about the neighbors' professions, Orin thought that they too must have been both blue collar workers and some professionals. The family did not own a car and rode the streetcar and later the buses everywhere they needed to go. Orin's grandparents still lived in the Jewish community in Northeast Minneapolis, and they would go there occasionally for family events and such. It was unnecessary to travel far for worship facilities and religious community, however, as Adath Jeshuran synagogue was just down the block.

Orin remembers spending a lot of time at the temple after school and on weekends. After he was five, he went to Hebrew school four days a week at Adath. They had not yet built the educational wing which today sits on the south side of the building, and the school would meet in a small room off the balcony. In addition to these meetings, there was also Sunday school. Because of the shortage of space, Sunday school met at the Calhoun school. Orin was also involved with a Jewish boys club called the A.Z.A and the boy scouts, both of which met at Adath. In addition to these indoor meetings, the temple also organized and sponsored athletic teams. These basketball and baseball teams played against the other local churches.

One thing I remembered during the interview was that I had seen, in the photo collection in the Minneapolis Collection at the Downtown Public Library, a handful of pictures of members of Adath Jeshuran in costume performing some kind of dramatic play. I asked Orin about this and he did recall the synagogue sponsoring performances. He even remembered being in a few of them! These many cultural and community events were indicative of the strong ties nurtured in the Jewish congregation. Orin remembers events where Jews from all over town would come. This, in part, is how he came to know so many people. He was not limited just to his one school or neighborhood, but through the temple he met and spent time with others from all over the city. For example, he remembers kids from over on the south side of Lake Harriet being bussed to Adath for after school Talmud Torah (Hebrew school).

When I asked Orin what he and his friends would do in addition to events in and around Adath, he first said nothing, "What was there to do?" he asked me, "we had no money, no car, and there was just far fewer things then to do". He then recanted and said they would sometimes go to the Jewish owned delicatessen on the southwest corner of 35th and Dupont. It was owned by the Green family. Across the street from their store, on the northwest corner, there was a penny candy store where the kids would buy sweets and things. They also sometimes would go to Abraham's, which was another local deli on Lake and Emerson, where Taste of India is now. Orin said he was good friends with the owner's son. I asked him if the family lived in the neighborhood and he said no, that they lived over on Minnehaha Parkway. This I thought was interesting because it may suggest that a more successful shop owner would have the choice to live in a nicer neighborhood than CARAG. Orin also recalls playing over in what was an empty field but is now the Greek Orthodox Church. There he built a big clubhouse, in which he and his friends played until it was mysteriously burned down.

Orin has many fond memories of the neighborhood. He remembers it as being a close knit place where people knew one another and would stop to chat. He experienced anti -Semitism only a couple times and only once in the neighborhood itself. He recalls that there was an old man who lived a couple blocks from Orin's family who had Nazi paraphernalia in his garage. Orin remembers that he and his friends would go by this man's house and yell insults at him.



This suggests to me that despite the gross nature of this man's values and the fact that he was older, the boys were confident and outspoken enough to confront him. While I don't want to read too much into their psychological or social background, I might hazard a opinion that Orin and his friends were sufficiently mature and educated to feel justified in their confrontation of this anti-Semite.

Orin's mother is still alive and apparently expressed interest in the project. Unfortunately, I ran out of time and could not interview her. It might be worth following up on, however, in that she would have an excellent span of experiences and memories.

## **Interview with Don Voss.**

Don lives at his hobby farm in Hammel, MN. Don Voss and his wife Aldythe are the oldest active members of Aldrich Presbyterian Church.

Mr. Voss is originally from Lincoln, Nebraska, where he was born, the first of seven children. His father was a high school teacher. His father married one of his students, ten years his junior. When attending the University of Nebraska, his father played center for five years, and was awarded a silver plate which allowed him to see free Cornhusker games for the rest of his life. Don recalled sneaking into a few of those games himself. Mr. Voss's grandfather had a large farm in Nebraska. Don moved to Minneapolis with his parents in the twenties and began attending the University of Minnesota.

He lived with his parents who rented a house on 3435 Hennepin. His parents moved back to Nebraska after only a couple of years in Minneapolis and Don began renting rooms. His first room was on 3521 Colfax, in the house of a Swedish tailor. Don rented the first bedroom and had bathroom privileges. The cost was 3 dollars a week. The couple who owned the house had no children of their own. Don was very fond of them and fondly recalled that they "talked pretty Swede". In other words, they spoke with heavily accented English. The man worked as a tailor out of a large wooden structure in his back yard. Don recalls that it was bigger than a garage. When I asked him about more details on the couple Don

laughed and said, "Well, they were real savey." Not knowing what this word meant I asked him to explain and Don bemusedly recalled that they were a very tight couple, very frugal. "They could really make a dollar go a long way".

As the eldest boy, Don's father bought him a Model A Ford. This was purchased at the corner of Hennepin and Fremont for \$610. Don drove this car to school. He would park in the back yard of his home on Colfax.

Don met his wife through her sister. The two of them were in a Chemistry Lab together at the U. Aldythe grew up at 3644 Aldrich. Her family moved there in 1935 from a house they rented on 31st and Harriet. The house actually had belonged to her grandfather but he had sold it to a third party. This person, however, was unable to pay the mortgage and thus it remained in the family. After her family moved out in 1949, her uncle lived there. Aldythe believes the house was built in 1905.

Aldythe's family had a strong connection to the Presbyterian church and they would walk to the services. I asked her if the neighbors ever got together at one another's homes. Aldythe recalls that they did a few times a year for prayer groups. These events would coincide with major religious holidays and would provide an opportunity for members of the church to meet with non members and introduce them to their manner of worship. Aldythe has been attending Aldrich Presbyterian for 71 years.

When Don first met his sister in law, he told her he was a top notch basketball player. She invited him to Aldrich to attend the service and play with their team. Don had been feeling pretty isolated in Minnesota. He had gone to a few other churches but hadn't felt welcome. When he attended his first service at Aldrich he felt an immediate warm welcome. The service he attended and became involved with was a special gathering called the "young peoples". This group met on Sunday nights.

Don became immediately involved with the church. He began welcoming people at the north door on Sundays. Remembering how he felt at some of the other churches he made a real attempt at following what he'd learned in the fraternity, "look em' in the eye and give them a firm handshake. No limp fish". Don especially focused on remembering people's names as he found this made visitors feel really good. Don has been standing at the door welcoming people ever since. In addition to his involvement at the door, Don also became very active in the church's athletic program.

When Don had first come to Aldrich he had in part come to play basketball. Aldrich had a strict rule however, that no one could play a game unless they attended three out of four preceding Sunday school lessons. Because he wasn't aware of this he was unable to play that first year. The following year, however, the person who had been the director of the program, and who had failed to inform him of the rules, left, and Don took up the reigns as director. For the

next 50 years he would be the leading figure in the church's burgeoning athletic program.

As discussed in the history of Joyce and Lyndale Congregational, the church provided the most organized venue for athletic competition. Don was instrumental in the organization of girl's athletics as well as beginning a new under nine league called appropriately enough, the "midgets". At the heyday of Aldrich's program there was seventeen competitive teams. The demand was so great in the forties, with the Sunday school growing from 200 kids to 600 in eight years, that they built the south addition at a cost of \$200,000. Don was eager to point out that this amount of money was paid off in only six years due to the generous tradition of tithing in the church.

The way the athletic leagues worked was simple. Each section of the city was associated with it's respective YMCA branch. There were eight sections. Some of these teams came from the North Side, Washburn, West Side, West Lake, the South Side, et cetera. These teams would compete within their own area to produce a champion. The champions from each section then met in the City Championship. Each year there was a district officer elected to organize the championship. Typically this was filled by a notable member of the community. Don gave Pug Lund and Arnie Ess as examples. Unfortunately, these individuals, while popular, did not always know what was best for the athletics. Don pointed out, emphasizing his desire to be humble, that at one point an elder member of one of the churches suggested they elect a person who really knew what was

going on. Taking this advice, the board elected Don Voss to a three year term. After Don served, another Aldrich man, Jed Shirley, was elected, and after Mr. Shirley a third Aldrich member, Harold Mofett was elected. All told, at the heyday of church athletics in the forties and fifties, Aldrich members were the directors because, in the words of Don Voss, "they knew the ropes better than the big shots".

## A Tour of a Special Old House

I met with Todd who owns the Queen Ann style home at 3028 Colfax. He told me that the realtor told him that it is the oldest house in Uptown, or at least within eight square blocks. Todd said that the house is 115 or so years old. The deed states that the home was built in 1868. Apparently the house is already on the 800 list and possibly already registered.

Of interest is that the back room of the house is unfinished. It is called the butcher room because apparently the women who owned it before Todd used to slaughter her animals there up until the 50's when the neighbors complained. The floors that aren't carpeted display old barn style wood (large, 6" planks). The floor slopes noticeably from the front of the house to the back. One other interesting facet is that the basement is an old cistern. This is immediately evident by the curving brick walls. Why a house would have been built over a well is a mystery. The porch and probably the foundation is supported on limestone. The owners, Todd thought, were some kind of plantation-esque farmers, who owned a sizable portion in the surrounding area. Todd plans to refurbish the outside of the house to its original clapboard finish.

Todd thought it would be cool if a small plaque or some other marker designated the house as historically significant. He also mentioned the three houses two blocks down as having been built by three brothers.

# **Chapter Three**

Resources and Contact People



## **Churches:**

Pastor Ruth Hograbe  
Joyce Methodist Church  
1219 West 31st Street  
822-5288

The Methodist Minnesota conference may also have some archives.  
Contact  
Thelma Boeder. Archivist for the Methodist district. 122 Franklin.  
870-0057 ext. 240

Don Portwood, Associate Pastor  
Lyndale Congregational Church  
810 West 31st  
825-3019

The MN Association of Congregationalist Churches also may have  
some information,  
335-8012

Don McNair  
Aldrich Ave. Presbyterian Church  
3501 Aldrich Ave. So.  
825-2479

## **Libraries and Government Offices:**

Borchert Map Library

Wilson Library, University of MN.

They have a good selection of early plat maps. They also have aerial views of the neighborhood.

Minneapolis Public Works Department's Print Room

contact Tim David 673-2431

309 2nd Avenue

Rm. 301

Mpls., MN. 55401

Minnesota Historical Society

Monday - Saturday 9-5 and Thursday till 9 PM

296-2143

The Historical Society has the best general collection of historical information regarding Minnesota. Their collection includes a newspapers that go back to the mid 1800's. Unfortunately, they do not have the newspapers indexed. The Society has a good collection of maps and photographs, but nothing that was as specific as the CARAG neighborhood. My appraisal is that it is a better library for researching more general historical themes and/ or more famous personages. For example, I was able to find some good info on William King. The Mpls. Collection at the downtown library was better for our purposes. The Historical Society has the full collection of the St. Paul Pioneer Press which up until the turn of the century covered Minneapolis too.

Minneapolis Public Library

The Mpls. Library downtown has the Minneapolis Collection which is probably the best grouping of information pertaining to Minneapolis and specific neighborhoods. They have almost the complete sets of

local neighborhood papers, some information on specific homes cataloged by their addresses, and a substantial photo collection. The library also has the Blue Books, which go back to 1887. The Blue Books list prominent people and where they lived. Like everywhere it is hit and miss. They also have the original building permits listed by address, plat maps, and most of the books that have been published by local historians and those that include pertinent local history. Joe Ellen, a resident of Linden Hills, is a librarian there and she was particularly helpful and interested.

Government Center  
673-5800

The Inspections office in the Government center has the Track Index which lists the building permits. These are kept on microfilm and go back to 1884. Prior to that date permits were not required. Unfortunately, in my experience many if the permits, especially the earlier ones, were not there.

### **Miscellaneous Contact People:**

John Davis  
447-3476

Owner of the properties on the southwest corner of 34th and Lyndale.

Bruce Dotchez  
Owner Assets Management, which owns the Park terrace Apts. on Aldrich  
822-9434

Dallas Drake

827-4658

Dallas lives in the Kingfield neighborhood. He has written for the local newspaper and done private research on the neighborhood's history. He is knowledgeable not only about basic historical events in the area, but also about the methodology necessary to research history. He seemed especially experienced with interviewing.

Bob Glancy

Burnet Realty

925-8266

A realtor for Burnet, he specializes in historical houses. Bob is a very friendly man with a personal interest, indeed, love for the area around the lakes. He has led walking tours following the old streetcar lines through the East Calhoun neighborhoods. I spoke with him a number of times and he is familiar with CARAG and our project.

Steve Jacobson

522-8369

Steve lived in and worked on the Calhoun Terrace Apartments. While he said he didn't find any "treasure" during the renovation, he did have good knowledge of the general floor plan, as well as educated guesses as to its original plan.

Jim Kuyper

Accent Arts

827-3217

Owens the duplex on the northwest corner of 31st and Bryant. Knowledgeable of local history.

Joanne Lee

822-6667

Joanne has lived at 3415 Aldrich since she was five years old. She has one of the best overall perceptions of the neighborhood.

Amy Lucas

Heritage Preservation Committee

Mpls. City Hall

673-2422

Amy is in charge of instructing people on how to obtain historic status and as such is an excellent resource for any information pertaining to old homes, building styles, neighborhoods, ect.. Her records include any property that has been considered, for example the 800 list. as well as properties that are on the registry.

Doug Marx

Walker Residence

827-8639

Former Pastor of Joyce Church 1963-1976

Helped start the nursery school and food shelf at Joyce. Very well liked, politically active.

Joe Medford

House owner, 3501 Bryant.

379-3037

Mr. Medford is an architect and has an interest in the history of his house. He believes that his house may originally have been a rooming house. His house is a "basic" Victorian, with basic stylistic touches but nothing fancy, e.g. no fireplaces.

Ray Myers  
2nd oldest member of Lyndale Church  
grew up in neighborhood  
5525 Vincent Ave So.  
Mpls. MN. 55410  
922-0169

Kris Nelson  
Project Director CURA  
330 Humphrey Center  
301-19th Ave. So. 55455  
625-1020

Kris is the project head of the grant that funded my work for CARAG. He is a good resource not only for general information about neighborhoods but also about the general process of community revitalization. CURA has a great WEB page at <http://freenet.msp.mn.us/org/npcr>, my report should be published here.

Don Olson  
Owned and operated the corner store (Olson's) on the northeast side of 34th and Lyndale for many years.  
Lives somewhere in Northern MN, but should be a wealth of knowledge.

Aaron Rubenstein  
823-6393

Aaron lives in the neighborhood. His grandparents also lived in the neighborhood and were members of Adath Jeshuran. Aaron is in charge of historic preservation in St. Paul, so he has a deep appreciation for and interest in housing and neighborhood histories.

Orin Rubenstein

942-6043

Orin is a great storyteller and knows just about everybody. He grew up in the neighborhood; first on 3424 Girard in the upper duplex and then later on 35th and Fremont. His mother is also a great repository of knowledge.

Dan Rothenberger

Oldest surviving member of Lyndale Congregational Church

St. Louis Park Nursing Home

3201 Virginia

935-0333

Jim Sazevich

"House Detective"

222-8160

While I was never able to reach him, Aaron Rubenstein recommended him as a professional researcher.

Bea Sward

Long time Joyce member. Grew up in neighborhood

Jones Harrison Senior Apartments

3700 Cedar Lake Road

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These are some of the books that are I found to be of interest and pertinent to the history of the area.

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